



To: The California Interagency Council on Homelessness

From: The Cal ICH Racial Equity Work Group

Subject: Cal ICH Racial Equity Work Group Efforts and Priorities

Date: September 5, 2024

Background

The California Interagency Council on Homelessness Action Plan called for the formation of the Cal ICH Racial Equity Work Group (REWG), charged with advancing racial equity and addressing acute disparities particularly for Black, Brown, Pacific Islander, Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent inequality in homelessness systems, funding, services, and strategies.

The REWG's mission is to develop inclusive, culturally responsive, and equity-driven solutions to prevent and end homelessness in California. Using a Racial Equity and Decolonizing framework, the REWG works to transform statewide policies, programs, and funding strategies to address the root causes and persistent drivers of racial and social inequities for Black, Brown and Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations.

The REWG went through an exhaustive process to be thoughtful in the REWG's formation and intentional effort to model the principles we hope to see across ICH State Departments and Agencies. This includes a six-month pre-implementation phase supported by community members with lived experience, Council Member Veronica Lewis, and staff representatives from DSS, HCD, HFA and Cal ICH. This pre-implementation phase created a path to developing the desired composition, recruitment strategy, and selection of members of the REWG, and determine the initial priorities of the REWG.

The result of those pre-implementation efforts concluded with the REWG being composed of seventeen members, including ten members representing State agencies and departments from the Council, and seven community members who have endured and experienced homelessness and those with experience serving historically excluded populations, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian

Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color. Co-Chairs consist of having one community member and one state department member.

Top Priorities

The REWG is passionate about actively engaging in Council and Council member work in an interactive way.

The Racial Equity Work Group has identified several top priorities to focus its efforts in embedding racial equity into California's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. These priority action areas are essential to addressing systemic barriers, promoting equitable resource allocation, and ensuring the well-being of all Californians, particularly those most affected by homelessness. Below is a summary of these priorities REWG plans to undertake:

1. **Development of Pathways:** To facilitate collaboration and enhance effectiveness, create a structured pathway for Departments to submit requests to the REWG. Additionally, this pathway would allow REWG to proactively identify and elevate potential areas of interest that Departments may wish to explore or address.
2. **Identifying Barriers and Gaps:** Upon request from departments or Council, conduct a review of existing toolkits, plans, and policies to identify barriers and gaps preventing progress on racial equity goals.
3. **Serving as a Resource:** Act as a resource hub for best practices, training, and guidance on implementing racial equity strategies.
4. **Concrete Input and Coordination:** Offer tangible contributions to the Action Plan and the development of a Racial Equity Framework toolkit that ensures the integration of racial equity considerations into the Action Plan to maximize impact and minimize harm.
5. **Uplifting Lived and Learned Experience:** With the members of the REWG who have lived experience, and members working directly with those experiencing and enduring homelessness, bring the needed attention to specific issues, barriers and voices to the real-time situations that impede the progress towards racial equity in the approaches to preventing and ending homelessness.
6. **Accountability Partnership:** Develop mechanisms for holding partners accountable to the racial equity initiatives infused in the Action Plan.

Recent Activities

Our recent activities include putting in the time and thought to support the establishment of critical processes and practices for effective racial equity integration into the State's

approaches to preventing and ending homelessness. The following is a summary of the group's activities and accomplishments to date:

1. **In-Person Retreat:** The work group convened for a full-day in-person retreat to establish racial equity foundational knowledge for a shared consciousness.
2. **Racial Equity Training:** Each monthly meeting includes a component of racial equity training to ensure all members are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.
3. **Creation of a Charter:** The group developed a comprehensive charter that includes a mission statement, guiding principles, and a structure for the work group's efforts.
4. **Thought Partnership:**
 - **State Funding and Policy Working Group:** Provided critical insights and recommendations to incorporate racial equity into funding and policy decisions.
 - **Advisory Committee:** Offers guidance to inform the committee's recommendations to the Council that reflects racial equity principles.
 - **Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) Team:** Provided thinking towards the integration of racial equity into data collection and analysis efforts.
5. **Election of Co-Chairs:** Successfully elected co-chairs to lead the work group and facilitate its initiatives.
6. **Racial Equity Framework Development:** The group is currently focused on identifying and developing racial equity frameworks to be integrated into the state's newest Action Plan. These frameworks will also serve as accountability tools to measure progress and impact.

Partner in the Development and Implementation of the Action Plan

Over the past few months, the Racial Equity Work Group (REWG) has been exploring various pro-equity and anti-racism frameworks to embed into the DNA of the Action Plan to assist State Departments with effective implementation for greater impact in reducing homelessness. REWG recognizes that a good Action Plan is critical to developing a unified and accountable approach with shared aims and metrics of success. However, most action plans do not achieve its intended impact due to issues with uptake and routine usage by system partners due to lack of familiarity in developing data-driven and community-centered solutions to address disparities. This is mostly due to system partners lacking the capacity and needed coaching and technical support for effective implementation of Action Plan Goals.

Given the current importance, of effective implementation to achieve greater impact in ending unsheltered homelessness, the REWG sees its role not only as an accountability partner and advisor to the Council and its members' departments, but to become a

support mechanism towards implementation of the Action Plan through the creation of a Racial Equity Implementation Hub.

REWG is currently designing what the Racial Equity Implementation Hub would look like, but some of its key activities would include assisting State Departments in achieving their goals in the Action Plan by providing consultation, coaching, technical assistance, and resources to facilitate state agency implementation of the Action Plan.

REWG Composition

Community Members

Name	Affiliation
Tiffany Duvernay-Smith	Lived Experience Consultant, LE Advisory Group Coordinator, LAHSA
Ingrid Granados	Lived Experience Consultant
LeeAnn Hatton	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me Wuk Indians of California, Community and Social Services Administrator
Veronica Lewis	Director, Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System (HOPICS)
Jacee Santos	Housing Manager, Bay Area Community Services – Lived Expertise
Earl Simms (Co-Chair)	Lived Experience Consultant, Executive Director, Restorative Community Solutions
Nadeja Steager	Executive Director, Community Health Leadership Council

CA Departments and Agencies Members

Appointee by Cal ICH Council Member	Department/Agency
Sarina Calderon, Associate Director	Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Monisha Avery, Chief Equity Officer	Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

Glenn Tsang, Policy Advisor for Homelessness and Housing	Department of Health Care Services
Janice Waddell, Assistant Deputy Director, Div of Federal Financial Assistance (Co-Chair)	Department of Housing and Community Development
Wendy Kaplan, Community Inclusion and Partnerships Manager- Office of Health Equity	Department of Public Health
Vivian Hernandez-Obaldia, Regional Director	Department of Rehabilitation
Marta Galan, Branch Manager	Department of Social Services
Xochitl Murillo, Deputy Secretary	Department of Veterans Affairs
Vevila Blossoming Bear, Tribal Liaison	California Interagency Council on Homelessness
To Be Appointed	Department of Aging

Attachment A: Racial Equity Work Group Charter